

Paul Cuffee School

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

January 22, 2009

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Paul Cuffee School was held on January 22, 2009 at the Paul Cuffee Lower School in Providence, Rhode Island.

Present: Kathleen Alvarez, Luz Avila, Jon Bennett, David Burnham, Russell Carey, Philip Gould, Barrett Hazeltine, Keith Mathews, Maria Monteiro, Joop Nagtegaal, Ana Cecilia Rosado, Sarah Reis, Babak Taleghani.

Excused: Su Almeida, William Clifton, Sr., Elizabeth Colon, Joan Canady Countryman, Stefano Crema, Robin Y. Miles, Martha Newcomb, Esq., Carolyn Pemberton, Fraser Preston.

Paul Cuffee Staff Present: David Bourns, Jonathan Conklin, Nina Giannotti, Julia Karahalidis, Nell Sears, Suzie Shaw.

Guests: Tina McDonough.

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. by President Joop Nagtegaal. Joop welcomed all to the January meeting of the board and noted with regret that Fraser Preston had recently resigned from

the Board due to his relocation to Florida. He commented that the week had been marked by bad news and good news. The bad consists of the ongoing economic crisis facing the country and, particularly for the School, the financial situation in the State of Rhode Island. The good includes the historic inauguration of a new president and the feeling of hope across the nation. Joop asked Dave Burnham to reflect on another historic moment. Dave noted that January 17th was the 250th anniversary of Paul Cuffee's birth and reported that he had had recent success in persuading the United States Postal Service to issue a stamp commemorating Paul Cuffee. The stamp is anticipated to be in circulation in about three years. Dave read from a recent article by Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates regarding the history of African-Americans and the White House, including a passage describing Paul Cuffee's visit to the White House, the first African-American to do so through the front door, at the invitation of President James Madison. Joop commented that he hoped the good news of the week will continue to overshadow the bad news of late, and he made some general remarks regarding the support of the new president and the administration for charter schools and education reform.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 20, 2008 meeting of the Board were approved unanimously, with a correction to the first paragraph noted by the Clerk. The motion to approve was made by Dave Burnham and

seconded by Keith Mathews.

Head of School's November Report

David Bourns began his report by noting that he had attended a meeting of the Rhode Island League of Charter Schools earlier that day and the state's financial situation, and funding implications for charters, was the primary topic of discussion. He also reported that he had just come from a meeting of fifth grade students and parents at the middle school, which had been marked by positive energy and enthusiasm.

There being no questions about the Head's written report, David turned to the NECAP test results from the October testing period, which had been received this week. The results showed significant improvement across all grade levels tested from the prior year. The rise in test scores reflected the hard work of teachers and students and Joop and the Board commented on the very positive results and congratulated the staff.

David and Joop also discussed a recent meeting with representatives of the Narragansett Bay Commission and the planned construction project which will be taking place on the Farmer's Market property over the next several years. As part of the larger multi-stage Combined Sewer Overflow Program, the NBC will be occupying much of the property adjacent to the school for the next four years or so in

order to excavate 250 foot drop shaft which will be connected to a system of underground tunnels. There was discussion of the anticipated impact of the construction project on the operations of the Lower School and Joop and David reported that the Commission representatives appeared very willing to work together to minimize disruptions to the School. The impact of these developments on the long term acquisition and use of the property are not fully known at this time, and discussions with the NBC will be ongoing.

Report on the After School Program

David introduced the presentation by Tina McDonough, Director of the After School Programs at the School. Tina provided an overview of the structure and offerings of the Programs, which are run by a staff of 22 with approximately 160 students attending weekly (33% of the Lower School and 90% of the Middle School populations). The diverse set of offerings rely on a number of strong community partnerships. Funding for the Programs is an ongoing challenge. 39% of the \$457,000 annual budget is provided by the 21st Century Grant, which must be renewed annually and the final year of eligibility for the School will be in 2012. Remaining sources of funding include direct pay, Department of Human Services reimbursements, and the School budget. Tina and Julia asked the members of the Board for help in the time ahead regarding other funding opportunities for the After School Programs and a number of suggestions and ideas were raised. There were questions and discussion, and Joop thanked Tina

for the excellent presentation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Nominating Committee

Joop delivered the report of the Nominating Committee on behalf of Joan Countryman. He referred the Board to the written report, circulated in advance, and noted the two documents which had been included – the draft expectations of Board members and the Board evaluation. Members were asked to complete the Board evaluation as soon as possible, and also to make suggestions regarding potential candidates for the Board (other than teachers and parents as there are no current vacancies among those positions) to any member of the Nominating Committee.

Finance Committee

Babak Taleghani delivered the report of the Finance Committee. He noted that the fourth quarter payment from the State will be approximately \$100,000 less than anticipated due to the State's financial situation. Looking forward to next year's budget, the staff and the Committee will be developing and discussing contingency plans and opportunities to reduce expenditures in the likely event of further reductions in revenue.

Babak reported that \$25,000 has been collected in connection with the Matching Challenge campaign and needs to be transferred to the capital reserve. Accordingly, he moved that:

The recommendation of the Finance Committee that \$25,000 be transferred from operating funds to the Capital Expansion portion of the Board Designated Reserve be endorsed and approved.

Barrett Hazeltine seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously by the Board.

Babak concluded the report of the Finance Committee by briefly reviewing other matters in the written report of the Committee.

Human Resources

Joop delivered the report of the Human Resources Committee in the absence of Carolyn Pemberton. Matters reflected in the Committee's written report were briefly reviewed, including the decision to publish the School's Human Resources Policy Manual on-line in order to make dissemination of the information, and the updating process, more effective and efficient for the staff. Jon Conklin reported on an effort within the Committee, and potentially with outside counsel, to review the Policy Manual to ensure that all appropriate policies and matters are included and adequately addressed.

Discussion of Public Relations and Outreach

David Bourns opened the discussion of whether or not the School should engage in a directed and proactive public relations effort to more effectively ensure the activities, achievements, and needs of the School are communicated to the public and, in particular, key opinion leaders and political leaders in the State. There was discussion of who the target audience for such an effort would be and the most effective means to reach those individuals. Ideas were suggested regarding creating opportunities to gather the Paul Cuffee community, especially parents and friends of the school, in a town meeting format to mobilize, network and gather their ideas and contacts in this effort. There was general support and enthusiasm for that idea. Suggestions were also made regarding leveraging the high public demand for the School (as evidenced by enrollment applications) and positive test results on behalf of the School and individuals who might be in a position to advise the School and the Board on the best manner in which to proceed. Several action items were identified for follow-up and it was agreed that the Institutional Advancement Committee would provide coordination to these efforts, with the need for direct involvement and support from all members of the Board being critically important going forward.

Other Business

Julia Karahalidis reported on a number of exciting and positive events taking place at the School throughout the Spring. These include the recent acquisition, through the generous support of a donor, of a kiln for the Lower School art room and the donation of \$25,000 worth of rugs by Fain's which will be exhibited and sold to benefit the School. Visiting artists are working with the second graders, there has been a significant increase in visitors to the School, and the network of friends and supporters is constantly expanding. Upcoming events of note include a talk by John Edgar Wideman on April 22, reading week in late March/early April, and the boat design competition March 26th. With a reminder to not forget the Annual Fund, no other business was brought before the Board.

Adjournment

Babak Taleghani moved to adjourn. Dave Burnham seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Russell C. Carey, Clerk